

University of Washington Tacoma

UW Tacoma Digital Commons

Sociology Student Work Collection

School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

3-2021

The #MeToo Movement: Helpful or Harmful to Feminism?

Lauren Herold
leh97@uw.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gender_studies

Recommended Citation

Herold, Lauren, "The #MeToo Movement: Helpful or Harmful to Feminism?" (2021). *Sociology Student Work Collection*. 73.

https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gender_studies/73

This Undergraduate Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at UW Tacoma Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sociology Student Work Collection by an authorized administrator of UW Tacoma Digital Commons.

THE #METOO MOVEMENT

HELPFUL OR HARMFUL TO FEMINISM?

What is the #MeToo Movement?


A social movement bringing awareness to, and empowering women, who have survived sexual abuse and harassment through publicizing one's experience. The goal is to empower women through solidarity and strength in numbers.

How it started...

- 2006: Tarana Burke, sexual assault survivor, started the #metoo movement on Myspace to raise awareness of sexual violence against women
- 2017: Alyssa Milano brought movement into spotlight by asking people to comment 'me too' on her post if they had experienced sexual assault



Harvey Weinstein

- Dozens of actresses came forward in 2017, accusing the producer of sexual misconduct & assault
 - Weinstein case sent #metoo movement into overdrive
 - 2020: Weinstein found guilty of first and third degree sexual assault; sentenced to 23 years in prison
 - He was first of the high-profile men accused of sexual assault since #metoo movement began to face real legal consequences (Grady, 2020).
 - With other high-profile men accused of sexual assault losing jobs, it felt like world was finally listening to women
- 

Positive Outcomes

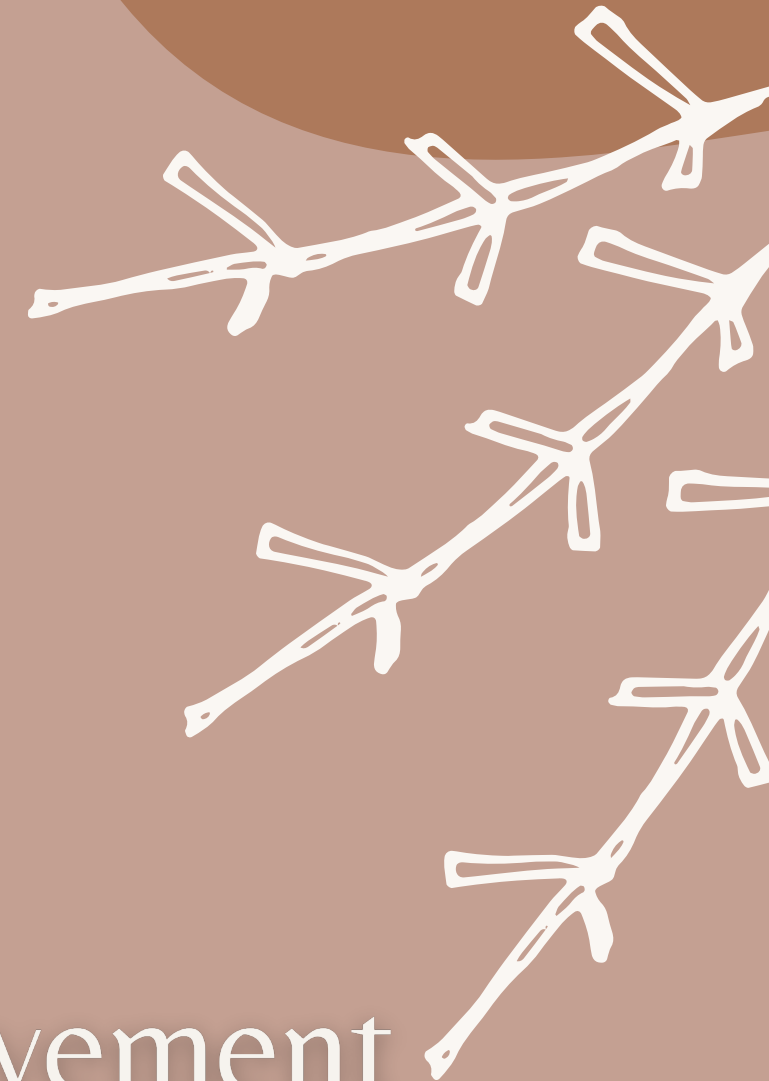
- Awareness

- bringing awareness to the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault
- A Post-ABC poll found the percent of Americans that thought sexual harassment was a serious issue in the workplace rose from 47% to 64% from 2011 to 2017 (Gibson & Guskin, 2017).
- A CareerArc survey also found that 68% of employed Americans say that the #MeToo movement has made the workers more vocal and empowered them to report sexual harassment at work (Saha, 2020).

Positive Outcomes

- Accountability

- survivors coming forward in large numbers urged for accountability of abusers from the public
- Survey of 1,000+ Americans found that 69% believe the #metoo movement created an environment of accountability for perpetrators (Smith, 2018).
- 74% of employed Americans say the #MeToo movement has helped to decrease the occurrence of sexual harassment in the workplace (Saha, 2020).



Positive Outcomes

- Policy Changes

- Several states, including California, have banned non-disclosure agreements in sexual misconduct cases (North, 2019). These had allowed many rich men, like Weinstein, to buy silence from their victims.
- States are expanding protections against harassment for workers. New York and California expanded their sexual harassment laws to cover independent workers (self-employed) as well as more business relationships (like producers).



Backlash Begins

- America soon became deeply divided on the #metoo movement
- Poll of 1000+ Americans found that 43% thought the movement "has gone too far" (Smith, 2018)
- Critics of the movement claimed it turned into a bandwagon witch-hunt, causing lives and reputations to be ruined without due process
- Political party seems to be an indication of feeling on the subject, as 3/4 of the 43% were made up of republicans and 1/4 were democrats

Unexpected Negative Outcomes

- Harvard Business Review found that the movement has seemed to cause steps back for women in the workplace (Morrison, 2019).
- Some companies seem to be more reluctant to hire attractive women, especially when they'll be working with male counterparts.

MeToo Workplace Backlash Among Men	2018	2019
Men who said they'd be reluctant to hire attractive women:	16%	19%
Men who said they'd be reluctant to hire women for jobs involving close interpersonal interactions with men:	15%	21%

Unexpected Negative Outcomes

The background features a solid brown color. In the lower half, there are large, overlapping organic shapes in a lighter tan and a dark brown. In the bottom right corner, there is a white line-art illustration of a plant with several long, thin, pointed leaves.

- Men's increased reluctance to interact with women in the workplace could hinder women's professional growth.

But, is this increased reluctance really a negative outcome of the #metoo movement, or rather a larger societal issue?

Overview

The bottom line is the #metoo movement has done much more good for the feminist movement than harm. Bringing awareness and empowering those who have survived sexual assault was long overdue. While there is still much work to be done, as sexual assault in the workplace has not shown to have decreased much, it has brought solidarity to many survivors, as well as give them a space to be heard.

Overview

As for the potential setbacks for attractive women in the workplace, this is an issue men need to be pressured to solve. The Harvard Business Review Survey results also found there were not significant differences between men and women about what they believe sexual harassment is (Morrison, 2019). This should dispute the claim that men are 'scared' to be around their female coworkers and commit sexual harassment. If they know exactly what it is, it should be easy not to do.

References:

BBC News. (2020, May 29). Harvey Weinstein timeline: How the scandal unfolded.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-41594672>

This was a helpful timeline of the events of Harvey Weinstein's sexual assault cases, one of the first abusers identified through the #metoo movement. It details many actresses that came forward as well as the legal action that was taken and how that led to his conviction.

Bower, T. (2020, November 30). The #MeToo Backlash. Harvard Business Review.
<https://hbr.org/2019/09/the-metoo-backlash>

This article overviewed a survey study done of men and women from a wide range of industries. The results supported the hypothesis that men were less likely to interact with women at work since the #metoo movement, even if it would be crucial for women's advancement. This shows some unintended backlash of the #metoo movement for the feminist movement.

Gibson, C., & Guskin, E. (2017, October 17). A majority of Americans now say that sexual harassment is a 'serious problem.' Washington Post.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/a-majority-of-americans-now-say-that-sexual-harassment-is-a-serious-problem/2017/10/16/707e6b74-b290-11e7-9e58-e6288544af98_story.html?noredirect=on

References:

This article spoke to how well the #metoo movement brought awareness to the extent and prevalence of sexual assault and harassment. This was one of the major goals of the movement, and surveys show it was successful in this aspect.

Grady, C. (2020, February 24). Harvey Weinstein verdict: Why the Me Too movement hasn't "gone too far." Vox. <https://www.vox.com/culture/2020/2/24/21150966/harvey-weinstein-rape-conviction-sexual-predatory-assault-me-too-too-far>

This article argues to those saying the #metoo movement has gone too far, that it actually hasn't gone far enough. These claims are based on the fact that there have been hardly any actual legal action or convictions of those who are accused of sexual assault.

Gurvinder, G., & Rahman-Jones, I. (2020, July 9). Me Too founder Tarana Burke: Movement is not over. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-53269751#:~:text=Tarana%20began%20using%20the%20phrase,Harvey%20Weinstein%20of%20sexual%20assault.>

This article informed me that #metoo movement was started by a sexual assault survivor over 10 years before it really gained traction. Alyssa Milano retweeted the creator (Tarana Burke) of the movement's tweet about putting "me too" as a status if you had ever experienced sexual assault, and it took off from there.

References:

Morrison, S. (2020, August 12). MeToo Movement Fallout: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. ELeaP. <https://www.eleapsoftware.com/metoo-movement-fallout-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>

This article covers the good and bad effects of the #metoo movement. While the movement brought more awareness to the issue of sexual assault and accountability for those that commit it, there are also issues of reluctance for companies to hire attractive women especially if they would be working closely with male counter-parts, which could limit their advancement.

North, A. (2019, October 4). #MeToo movement: These 7 facts show its impact. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/10/4/20852639/me-too-movement-sexual-harassment-law-2019>

I used this article for information regarding policy change that has come about as a result of the #metoo movement.

Saha, S. (2020, March 10). 76% of the U.S Employees Say #Metoo Positively Impacted the Workplace Culture, Surveys Careerarc. HR Technologist. <https://www.hrtechnologist.com/news/culture/76-of-the-us-employees-say-metoo-positively-impacted-the-workplace-culture-surveys-careerarc/#:%7E:text=The%20survey%20found%20that%20nearly,report%20sexual%20harassment%20at%20work.>

References:

I used this source for statistics on how the #metoo movement affected employees in the workplace. The survey was given to over 1000 Americans from an HR technology company, CareerArc.

Smith, T. (2018, October 31). On #MeToo, Americans More Divided By Party Than Gender. National Public Radio. <https://choice.npr.org/index.html?origin=https://www.npr.org/2018/10/31/662178315/on-metoo-americans-more-divided-by-party-than-gender>

This source discusses how Democrats and Republicans view the #metoo movement differently. Specifically how republicans make up the majority of people surveyed saying the movement has 'gone too far'.

Wikipedia contributors. (2021, March 3). Me Too movement. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Me_Too_movement

I used wikipedia to get a definition of what the #metoo movement is. The page did a good job of defining the term and explaining how it came into the spotlight through the use of social media.